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LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claims:

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A method for accessing readers by means of a system ~~according to claim~~
+ comprising:

an I/O port for establishing connection between said system and readers;

a program having the functionality to communicate with said readers via said I/O port;

an operating system providing access of said program to said readers;

characterized by the further components:

a configuration tool for specifying access conditions of said program to said readers;

a reader access layer component for determining the reader to be accessed according to
the access conditions specified by said configuration tool, the method comprising the
steps of:

sending a request for using a reader from said program to reader access layer;

calling up a reader access list by said reader access layer;

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1 carrying out a routine by said reader access layer by means of said reader access list with
2 the following steps:

3 identifying an available reader with highest priority; and

4 returning result to said program.

5 11. (currently amended) A method according to claim 10 ~~claim 8~~, wherein said routine
6 comprises the steps of:

7 identifying a particular reader with the highest priority by using said reader access list;

8 examining the availability of said particular reader;

9 if said particular reader is not available, identifying a next reader with the next lower
10 priority by using said reader access list and examining the availability of said next reader;
11 and

12 repeating the steps of identifying and examining using a subsequent lower priority as long
13 as an available particular reader is identified.

14 12. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein a newly added reader automatically
15 receives the lowest priority in the reader access list.

16 13. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein programs having no assigned priorities in
17 the reader access list receive a standard priority in said reader access list.

18 14. (original) A method according to claim 10, including changing assigned priorities and
19 standard priorities using the configuration tool.

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1 15. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein the priority (0) means that the reader is
2 only available for programs with this reader selected.

3 16. (currently amended) A computer program product stored on a computer-readable media
4 containing software for performing ~~the a method according to claim 10~~ for accessing
5 readers by means of a system according to claim 1 comprising:

6 _____
7 an I/O port for establishing connection between said system and readers;

8 a program having the functionality to communicate with said readers via said I/O port;

9 an operating system providing access of said program to said readers;

10 characterized by the further components:

11 a configuration tool for specifying access conditions of said program to said readers;

12 a reader access layer component for determining the reader to be accessed according to
13 the access conditions specified by said configuration tool, the method comprising the
14 steps of:

15 sending a request for using a reader from said program to reader access layer;

16 calling up a reader access list by said reader access layer;

17 carrying out a routine by said reader access layer by means of said reader access list with
18 the following steps:

19 identifying an available reader with highest priority; and

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- 1 returning result to said program.
- 2 17. (canceled)
- 3 18. (currently amended) An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium
4 having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing accessing of
5 readers, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture
6 comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the
7 steps of ~~claim 10 a method for accessing readers by means of a system according to claim~~
8 ± comprising:
9 _____
10 an I/O port for establishing connection between said system and readers;
11 a program having the functionality to communicate with said readers via said I/O port;
12 an operating system providing access of said program to said readers;
13 characterized by the further components:
14 a configuration tool for specifying access conditions of said program to said readers;
15 a reader access layer component for determining the reader to be accessed according to
16 the access conditions specified by said configuration tool, the method comprising the
17 steps of:
18 sending a request for using a reader from said program to reader access layer;
19 calling up a reader access list by said reader access layer;
20 carrying out a routine by said reader access layer by means of said reader access list with
21 the following steps:

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- 1 identifying an available reader with highest priority; and
- 2 returning result to said program.
- 3 19. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of
- 4 instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for accessing of readers,
- 5 said method steps comprising the steps of ~~claim 10~~ a method for accessing readers by
- 6 means of a system according to claim 1 comprising:
- 7
- 8 an I/O port for establishing connection between said system and readers;
- 9 a program having the functionality to communicate with said readers via said I/O port;
- 10 an operating system providing access of said program to said readers;
- 11 characterized by the further components:
- 12 a configuration tool for specifying access conditions of said program to said readers;
- 13 a reader access layer component for determining the reader to be accessed according to
- 14 the access conditions specified by said configuration tool, the method comprising the
- 15 steps of:
- 16 sending a request for using a reader from said program to reader access layer;
- 17 calling up a reader access list by said reader access layer;
- 18 carrying out a routine by said reader access layer by means of said reader access list with
- 19 the following steps:

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- 1 identifving an available reader with highest priority; and
- 2 returning result to said program.
- 3